

Councilwoman Jane Bonner Announces Completion of Draft Route 25A Land Use Plan

posted on 7/19/2011 10:00:03 AM

July 18, 2011

Farmingville, NY - At two recently held Community Planning public forums, Councilwoman Jane Bonner introduced the Draft Route 25A Land Use Plan for the hamlets of Mount Sinai, Miller Place, Sound Beach, Rocky Point, Shoreham and Wading River. A key feature of the Plan is the Route 25A Planned Conservation District, a progressive measure that seeks to preserve existing open space, scenic vistas, and recreational resources from traditional development. In the absence of this measure, these resources would quickly be developed with traditional subdivisions, thereby losing the corridor's rural and farming heritage forever. The proposed new zoning Overlay District will float over the entire corridor and "land on" all farmland and private golf courses of at least 35 contiguous acres. As a result, future development will be limited to 30% of the acreage, with 70% being preserved in perpetuity. When implemented, the Planned Conservation District will save over 400-acres by tightly clustering future development. Another unique aspect of this proposal is that preservation will be achieved without the expenditure of public funds, which are severely limited by the current recession.

The Plan, developed over the past 18-months, included extensive community participation in five Community Planning Forums held from January through April of 2010. The visioning sessions provided the basis for the Draft Land Use Plan. In total, more than 300 corridor residents, civic leaders and stakeholders participated. The community's overriding concern was to preserve the current high quality of life enjoyed by corridor residents. Key findings in the Final Visioning Report included preserving community character of the area, preventing future suburban sprawl, limiting "big box" retail and its harmful impacts, improving both the safety and appearance of Route 25A, and revitalizing local businesses and Main Streets along the corridor.

The Draft Plan's major features include the creation of three new zoning Districts:

- **Hamlet Center Overlay District:** Future retail expansion would be directed to existing commercial centers, thereby limiting retail sprawl in the areas between centers. A mix of retail and residential uses would help support local businesses and revitalize the centers. Any future "Big Box" stores would be limited to between 60,000 - 75,000 sf, with a strong preference to the lower end of this range.
- **Route 25A Overlay District:** The areas between existing centers would continue to accommodate residential uses, and provide non-retail commercial and business uses and services to residents of the corridor.
- **Planned Conservation District:** Existing agricultural and recreational uses would be preserved through mandated tight clustering thereby preserving 70% of this open space for future generations. Additional uses permitted to include vineyards, and by special permit, high technology green uses such as solar farms.

Councilwoman Jane Bonner, who has been the driving force behind the Plan said, "The Route 25A Draft Land Use Plan is a resource conservation plan, not a development plan. It will preserve and enhance the quality of life for all residents of the North Shore." She also noted with pride that over 400-acres of farmland and other open space will be preserved along the Route 25A Corridor from Miller Place to Wading River. "Equally important, the plan encourages locally owned businesses, accommodates modest growth in the future, and most importantly, preserves the corridors farming and rural character."

Supervisor Mark Lesko said, "Preserving open space has been a priority of mine since taking office and the Route 25A Draft Land Use Plan accomplishes the goal of land conservation while at the same time focusing on redevelopment of existing commercial centers. I commend our Department of Planning, Environment and Land Management for their work to bring this Plan forward."

Tullio Bertoli, Town of Brookhaven Commissioner of Planning, Environment and Land Management (PELM) said, "The Route 25A Corridor Draft Land Use Plan is a preservation based document which uses a series of planning instruments in order to preserve land, the existing quality of life and the unique rural character of the five North Shore communities."

Dr. Lee Koppleman, Long Island's preeminent planner and an advisor to the study said, "This Draft 25A Corridor Plan is the culmination of more than a decade of residential participation in the preparation of hamlet plans from Mt. Sinai

to Shoreham/Wading River. It ties together all previous studies and specifically addresses the traffic, land use and business development opportunities in a coherent fashion. The combination of Town Planning Department personnel assisted by a very able consulting firm who were both guided by the citizens and their elected Councilwoman is a model of good planning initiatives that other communities should emulate."

Dick Amper, Executive Director of the Pine Barrens Society and a leader in environmental conservation said, "I'm delighted that the Draft Plan reflects so well the input supplied by the citizens of these communities. The Draft Plan is a great government success story and is a prototype of both sound environmental and community planning."

The Draft Route 25A Land Use Plan is posted on the Town's web site as follows: www.brookhaven.org. Public comment on the Draft Route 25A Land Use Plan will be accepted until July 15.

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